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A N
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TO THE
PEOPLE
CALL'D
QUAKERS.

(Price Six-pence.)

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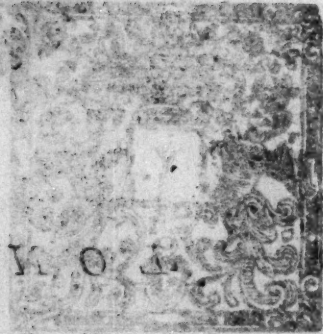
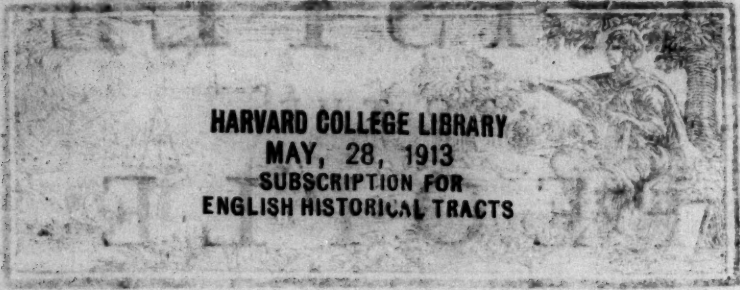
UPON

Occasion of their Losing
their TYTHE-BILL.



LONDON:

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A N
EPISTLE
TO THE
PEOPLE
CALL'D
QUAKERS, &c.

GENTLEMEN,



OUR late Application
to Parliament, to be
reliev'd in the Man-
ner of Paying Tythes,
in case of some Scr-
upulous Consciences a-
mong you, tho' it had
the Countenance of One who had deny'd
his Favour to another Set of Dissenters,

yet met a Fate in the Event equally unsuccessful. You had, indeed, the Felicity, to see yourselves publickly supported in One House; and tho' the Bill first offer'd was generally disliked, yet you could not but observe with Pleasure, that Gentlemen of very different Complexions united to furnish out another, suitable as they thought to your Wants, and free of the Objections to the First. But by a sort of Fatality scarce to be accounted for, and to your great Disappointment, this new-modell'd Bill, when it came into the Other House, was as much disliked, and seemed as liable to Censure, as the other could possibly be.

As this extraordinary Occurrence must be much the Subject of your Thoughts; I shall throw together some few Observations occasion'd by it, in this publick Address to you as a Body. And the first thing I shall turn your Attention to, shall be the General Temper of Both Houses of Parliament throughout the last Winter. Whoever gave his Attendance during the last Session, must have observed the generous

nerous and free Spirit that prevailed amongst the Members of Both Houses upon every Question relating to the Liberty of Mankind, and their Readiness to exempt their Fellow-Subjects from every Sort of Oppression. Many Gentlemen, who had been stigmatiz'd with the Name and Character of *Tories* and Bigots, came as fully into Sentiments of General Liberty, and express'd as strong a Dislike to Ecclesiastical Encroachments, as the most Open and profess'd *Whigs*: And tho' a particular Point was lost, the *Repeal* of the *Test-Act*; yet even That must be accounted for in another Manner, than from the real Temper and Genius of the House. So that what a Noble Patron of Liberty observed upon the Mention of that Affair, had less of Figure in the Expression than perhaps it was thought to have; 'That tho' it was an Affair in which almost every Gentleman concur'd, yet it was lost by that — (I forget the Epithet) Reason, *That it was not a proper Time*.' The Character and Behaviour of the Speakers for the *Mortmain-Bill*; the Manner in which the Extension of *Advowsons*

sons was obtain'd; the Alteration of the Majority after that Question, as well as the Conduct of particular Gentlemen, who to their Honour stopt all farther Peculiarities contended for, sufficiently demonstrate the Temper and Publick-Spiritedness of the Members, and fully support all I could say of the just animated Zeal that predominated for the Equal Liberty of all good Subjects of the Community.

But though there appeared this laudable Zeal in so many for the Liberties and Welfare of the Whole People; yet some Gentlemen, who have at all Times discover'd little, interested, partial Views, were not to be influenced by this Appearance, otherwise than to combine together to alarm the Kingdom, against they knew not what: for at the Time of the Alarm your Bill had in no Shape appeared. Any One who considers what Regards had been shewn by Persons in Power to these Gentlemen; the High Favour their LEADER had been admitted to; the Sacrifices that had been made to his Opinion; and the known

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Deference that was paid to his *Wisdom*; would have been apt to have concluded, That in One Point, a Point of small Moment, in Favour to some Few who had also shewn themselves special Friends, these Gentlemen would have had some Tenderneſs for their Great Patron and Publick Supporter, and permitted Him, undisturbed, to have exerted his Power in Aid of ſuch a Handful of Men: Any One would have thought, that aſſoon as they knew it a Matter which had his Countenance, they would have acquieſced in his Opinion; and not have doubted, but his known long-try'd Friendſhip for them, would have guarded againſt every poſſible Injury that might reſult to any One of their Body from this Deſign. But all Reasonings of this Kind are known to have been chimerical; and, as if there were a Superiority obtain'd through long-poſſeſs'd Favour, not the leaſt Intimation is given of their Diſlike, no decent Application is made to Him, no Requeſt, no Remonſtrance: But they aſſemble among themſelves, and reſolve to exert the Power with which they have been long cloath'd.

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The Honour, the Interest, the Wisdom of their Favourer, is at once disregarded; the Honesty, the Christianity, the Humanity, of the Design, is despised. They will shew their own Importance; and, by raising an Apprehension, and spreading an Alarm through the Nation, endeavour to prevent what true Wisdom and good Policy will for ever think right and commendable.

WHETHER this Alarm had any Weight with Great Men, I will not so much as enquire. Many of you were Witnesses what Numbers of the Clergy frequented the Avenues to Both Houses, while you were solliciting your Bill. This Behaviour of those Gentlemen is far from being so censurable as some Persons treated it. Every Body of Men, every Private Man, in the Kingdom, has a Right to apply to the Legislature, and to particular Members, when they apprehend their Rights or Liberties are in Danger from any depending Bill. There is indeed a Decency to be used in all such Cases; and Gentlemen who

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are Members of Either House of Parliament, who may differ in their Sense of such apprehended Danger, are to be consider'd and treated with equal Respect as Those of contrary Sentiments ; else the Freedom of Parliament may become as precarious from Without-Doors, as it can at any Time be supposed to be from any other improper Influence.

BUT as you were Witnesses of the constant Appearance of the Clergy against your Bill ; you were likewise equally Witnesses of the Objections and Arguments that were used by those who spoke against it. I do not mean the Council, who appear'd at the Bar. You are not to be surpris'd at the low Wit, the seeming Malevolence, the artful Misrepresentations, the unbecoming Insinuations and Reflections, even upon those among you of the tender Sex, that were thrown out against you by any of them. 'Tis a Liberty as common as indecent ; and generally has as little Weight, as it ought at any Time to have Countenance. But having accidentally mention'd it, as
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it respected your Body ; I must remind you, That you have very little Reason to be displeased with it, as it gave the just Occasion to have the Regularity of your Manners, the Decency and Simplicity of your Dress, your whole Practical Christian Conduct mention'd by a very Great Man, in such a Manner, as could not but give you the highest Pleasure, and must do you the truest Honour where-ever his Applause shall reach. I must own, when I heard that elevated Pathos, in which the Noble Orator display'd your just Commendation, and observed how his Reprehensions of the unbecoming Liberties of the Pleader were received by almost every One present ; I could not but think, whatever was the Fate of your Bill, that you had the greatest Reason to be pleas'd that you had made the Attempt.

I say, you yourselves were Witnesses to the numerous Objections that lay against the Bill for your Relief ; which were shewn with that great Force and Clearness, that it was generally understood

derstood to be almost impossible to defend it. I will not so much as attempt to remind you of them. They were such, in some Instances, as were consider'd equally injurious to you, and to the Rights of the Clergy.

AND as you were Witnesses to these Objections, you saw too, from the Time of the Session, that it was too late to go into a Committee upon it. Nor was any thing more contended for at last, than the decent Manner of getting rid of it for the present.

Y O U had the Pleasure also to observe, No one contended, that you ought not to be relieved from any real Grievance; or that you ought to be harass'd, and run to unnecessary Expence, in lame and improper Courts. All that was insisted on was, that as the just Legal Property of the Clergy ought to be secured to them; this Bill would weaken that Security, and at the same time would not give you the desired Relief.

HAVING mention'd the *Legal* Property of the Clergy, give me Leave to remind you, how publickly and generally this Right of Tythe was treated as such. You heard not the least Word of a *Divine* Right to this Claim; not the least Intimation of a Heavenly Appointment to this Demand. No; you heard of its Origin; and the Manner in which it was first introduced into the Christian Church: A Manner, as little to the Honour of the Claimants, as a proper Due for their Function is reasonable and fit.

NOR can I forbear, tho' a little out of the Way, to call to your Attention what fell publickly from a very Great Authority, pending your Bill. And I mention it the rather, because I find the Clergy of a particular Diocese are designing their Acknowledgments for the Services they received from his Aid. Not only the Divine Right of Tythe, about which the World has hitherto been entertained, was not in any, the softest, Manner insisted on; But upon Occasion of Men-

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tioning the Commission by which these Gentlemen pretend to act, and the Extraordinary Power they have always supposed themselves to convey to One Another: — upon a Mention of that Power, no less than giving the Holy Ghost; This was so far from being defended in the common Acceptation of the Words, that that Great and Learned Critick declared, He had always consider'd them, and always us'd them, as *Precatory* only. And I hope, the Reverend Body, whom they acknowledge his great Services and Merits, will not fail to pay Him all proper Thanks for thus freeing the *Ordination-Office* from the Objections of Those who are without.

FOR Myself I must own, That it was with great Pleasure I heard this Explanation from this confessedly Great Man, and Undoubted Good Churchman; because I had observed, in Cases of much less Importance, where any Endeavour has been us'd to reconcile any of the Offices of our Church to a *Plain Account* of Scripture Doctrine; it had been

been represented as doing Violence to the Words of the Compilers, and as reducing their Meaning to a low unnatural Sense. And from what any one may have observed; however just and rational this Construction of those Words, *Receive the Holy Ghost, &c. whosoever Sins ye remit, &c.* in the Ordination-Office, as signifying a mere Supplication, may be in itself; yet had the same low Construction been given by Another; had He so explain'd away the vulgar Sense of them, as being contrary to Truth and Scripture; what Exclamations should we not have heard! what *Remarks*, in various Shapes! perhaps a *Representation of the Convocation*, if sitting! *Great and Grievous Offence* had been given! and; as in a former Instance, a Masterly Pamphlet would have been thrown out, artfully entitled, *Our Blessed Saviour vindicated, in the Commission given to his Apostles and their Successors!*

BUT happy for Truth, and the present Times, this Disclaim of the Supernatural Conveyance comes from a Quar-

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ter that will meet a better Fate: And tho' some of his Brethren at first seemed a little shocked with the open plain Manner of the Assertion; yet you did not hear them in any Way publicly contradict it; nor have I seen any thing since, not even in the *Miscellany*, disclaiming this extraordinary Sense of the Words.

You will excuse me, that I have troubled you so long on a seemingly remote Point to your Bill, when you consider how fully these Instances prove the little of Bigotry that is left for Extravagant Claims; and consequently, the Hope You and all Dissenters from the Establishment may have of better Treatment than in former Times. Nay, you must for your great Satisfaction remember, That the same Great Person asserted, That upon an Enquiry, in the Diocese he belonged to, there had not been One Prosecution of any of your People for above Ten Years past. How far this Christian Tenderness towards You was owing to Him who presided there for that Time, is impossible to say; but You need not doubt,
but

but as it was a Fact mention'd with Ap-
 probation, whatever Countenance it can
 have for the Future, will be given by
 him that made the Observation; in as full
 a Manner as can be supposed to have been
 given by his Predecessor.

HAVING mention'd the Affair of *Proseu-*
tions, I cannot but own to you my Surprize,
 that from the numerous Instances you have
 of them, you had not provided yourselves
 with an ample Number, legally prov'd,
 to have produced in Support of your
 Bill. For tho' it must be own'd, it would
 have been sufficient to found an Appli-
 cation to Parliament for the Removall of
 an Oppressive Power, to shew that such
 a Power actually existed, tho' it had ne-
 ver exerted itself. Yet as your Dread of
 that Power did not arise from its Existence
 only, but from repeated Operations of
 it; it seem'd almost astonishing, that you
 should not have been ready with your
 Legal Proofs of the Facts; especially as
 you had turn'd the Publick Attention
 to them by your printed Cases, where
 they are enumerated. This is an Er-

for you will doubtless rectify against another Time. And as it was in general taken Notice of, how few Prosecutions, if any, of the malevolent Kind, had been within Twenty Years past, since the happy Accession of the present Royal Family; it will not be improper for you to shew the Numbers that were in any short Interval, when the Spirit of Bitterness and Faction at any time reign'd. Nor can you have the least Room to doubt, but Those, who mention'd with such high Pleasure this happy Period, of an almost Void of such Prosecutions, will give you all the Assistance of their Great Abilities, to free you from the Possibility of them for the Future.

It were, indeed, to be wished, That you would, as a Body, consider this Affair of Tythes anew. The Objections that naturally lie against Men, who plead Conscience against the Payment of Money, which is made the Property of another by the Laws of the Community, are such, as very much tend to weaken

weaken the Indulgence that is due to the Judgment of any Part of Mankind, however misinform'd; and you could not but observe, what Weight every thing that was hinted at of that Kind, had. It was owned by the Noble Lord who was so good as to be your Apologist, that nothing but the Experience of your Integrity in this Particular, could remove some Suspicion from every Man's Breast on such an Occasion; and had not your Sincerity and Uprightness been establish'd from other Parts of your Conduct, it would perhaps have been difficult to have had it generally believed in this.

I do not agree with some Gentlemen, that the Law is, or ought to be, the Rule to Conscience. The Consequences that would follow from such a Proposition, are very obvious, and were shewn with great Force and Clearness. But where the Law has ascertain'd Property, which is the present Case, the Refusing to comply with such Law is doubtless a Detention of another's Right, as far as Right

Right can be founded either on the Grant of Society, or its Ratifying the Donation of private Persons; which Tythes originally in many Cases were. For if every Man were, in Instances where such Property is concerned, to oppose his private Sense to that of the whole Legislature, so as to refuse Compliance with such Law while it existed, what Confusion would it not introduce? What, I conceive, is the proper Conduct of any Man who should at any Time consider Law-makers as deviating from natural Right, and so far establishing Iniquity by a Law, is, to lay before the Publick his Sentiments upon the Point, and to endeavour by all proper Methods to obtain the Repeal of such Law. But till then, in order that Society may go on; his Acquiescence under it must be necessary. Else this certain Consequence would follow, That all Obedience to Laws made by the Representatives of the whole Body of the People, would depend on the particular Judgment of each Individual; and owe their Force not to any

any Enacting Power, but to the after
 Approbation of each particular Member
 of the Society. This Rule to Conscience,
 or Judgment, I would be understood to
 confine to Points which the Society can
 properly concern it self with: such as I
 take the Case of ascertaining Property to
 be: And not to Extrajudicial Points
 where they ought to have no Cogni-
 tance; such as merely respect Religion
 and the Deity.

I must own, I have often wonder'd,
 that You, whose Principles are explicit
 against War and Retaliation of Injury,
 could so readily pay to the Current SER-
 vices of the Year, and appear in our
 Courts of Law in Defence of your own
 Rights, and yet refuse the Allotment the
 State has made for its publick Officers:
 For such I consider all those to be to
 whom this Payment of Tythe is appro-
 priated. There is not now, whatever
 formerly has been, as I have observed,
 any Claim made of a Divine Right to
 this Payment; which being a tenth Part,
 is

is generally call'd *Tithe*, the same Term that is us'd in the *Jewish* Laws. While that was the Case, it might lead some of You to imagine, a ready Compliance with it, was owning such a Divine Right, and the other Spiritual Powers which some of the Clergy formerly made Pretences to. But as, at present, this is allow'd on all Hands to be a mere Legal Settlement, and all that is contended for was certainly appropriated before any Possessor now in being had any Right in it; surely it would be highly to your Honour, and manifest your good Sense to the World, to reconsider this Point in your Publick Assemblies. And Those among you who see this Affair in a different Light from what you did formerly, could not contribute more to your general Interest, than by assisting your weak Brethren, to free them, as far as your Judgments and Practice could free them, from their Scruples in this Particular.

There is certainly nothing to be said to the Argument that is urged against

gainst you, That what you detain, or will not freely pay, is not your own Property. All Purchases liable to such a Payment, include in them but a proportionate Share of the Property of the Whole; and no more is paid for the Purchase, than if the Tythe Part were actually separated from the other Parts: And you know, that if an Estate be Tythe-Free, (as many such there are in this Kingdom,) such Estate is rented at a proportionably higher Rate, than an equal Number of Acres of equally good Land which pay Tythes, is rented at: Upon what Principle of common Justice, then, can you with-hold what in no Manner belongs to you? And why should you refuse it to any One to whom the Society has directed it to be deliver'd?

Y o u see, I even labour this Point with you, because, as a Friend to so worthy a Body of Men, I would willingly have you free from the Objections that lie with wise and honest Men against your Conduct in this Matter.

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As to a Bill for the more safe and easy Payment or Recovery of this Legal Due ; this is as desirable to Those who have the Right to it, on Other Persons Accounts, as truly as on Yours. Every Man who knows any thing of this Affair throughout the Kingdom, knows that the Person who is entitled to the Tythe meets equal, if not greater, Difficulty from those of his own Persuasion, than from those of your People. *Tom D'Urfy* represented Other People than *Quakers*, in those well known Lines,

*I've cheated the Parson, I'll cheat him
again :*

*For why should the Blockhead have One
in Ten ?*

And the Practice since has convinced many of the poor Clergy, that that sort of Reasoning too often prevails.

It will therefore be worthy the Consideration of the Legislature, to give general Relief in this Case. To aid those
who

who have Doubts as to the Fitness of this Payment, that it may be taken from them in the easiest Manner; and where Difficulties arise, to oblige to a Method that will remove them with the least Expence; and so prevent, as far as they can, all vexatious Suits, and ineffectual Prosecutions.

THE more simple a Bill of this Kind is framed, certainly the better. Suppose, as there is at present an Option of going before the Justice; the Law should make that an obligatory Point. This, tho' not necessarily final, would in numerous Instances have a very good Effect. Men, who were of bad Dispositions, and vexatious in their Natures, when obliged to go to a Mediator, who was to have the whole Matter laid before him, would often in flagrant Cases submit to his Judgment, for the Sake of their own Characters; and in many doubtful Points, such an Examination would, in the Nature of Things, clear them up to the Satisfaction of both Parties.

IF

to If further, All Proceſs in Eccleſiaſtical Courts for Cauſes of this Nature were totally prohibited, or the ſufficient Power veſted in thoſe Courts for final Recovery; it would take away what now can only be a Medium of diſtreſſing Others, without doing the Clergy themſelves any the leaſt Good. And tho' the Fact were, that Few of the Clergy are ſo bad as to make uſe of this Diſtreſſing Power; yet while it exiſts, it is a Reproach upon their Methods of puniſhing ſuch Delinquents, without at all helping themſelves.

THE Caſe of Tything-men, as in your laſt Bill, and the Notice neceſſary to be given, with other Particulars, as I have obſerved, ſeemed liable to ſome Objection. But as a Proportion of the Produce is by the Law Another's certain Property, why might not the Bill enact, That as the Tythe ſhould be always left on the Ground, it ſhould be as Penal to remove it into the Barn of the Farmer, as it would be to ſeize and

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remove

remove his Neighbour's Corn into his Barn? For such in Fact every Detention or Removal of Tythe is.

I HAVE troubled you with very little upon some Points of which you heard much: Such as, your not being Christians; your Obstinacy, and Pretence to Conscience; and your being such an inconsiderable Part of the Society, as ought not to have such publick Regard. Nor have I taken much Notice of the many great and excellent Things that were said of the Church of *England* and its Clergy. The Complements that were made, you are to consider to be such as are always paid to an Establishment, let the Establishment be what it will; as the Reproaches likewise are such as usually are thrown out upon those who in any Manner differ from it. I doubt not but a Scrupulous *Episcopalian*, upon Occasions that might be suggested, would have met something of the like Treatment from their publick Pleaders, before an Assembly of the Kirk of *Scotland*,

land, or perhaps even at *Pensylvania* it self; and Popery, and even Paganism, have had the same Honours paid to their Publick Worship, in Places where they have happen'd to be, as it is phras'd, *a Part of the Constitution*. Dissenters of every Kind were always painted as *pestilent Fellows* and *Movers of Sedition*; while the Establishment was always *the Image that fell down from Heaven*. Harangues of this Sort have nothing to do with Truth; and do no real Injury or Honour to Those to whom they are apply'd. Men of Sense and Virtue are little moved by such Orations; and in Proportion to their Humanity, feel Pity, rather than Resentment, for those who condescend to make use of them.

I am,

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Yours &c.

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